UNIONS HOLD LEAD IN BRITISH STRIKE

So Far Workers Have Gained All Their Ends.

By the Associated Press.

London, Sept. 27 .- The first day of the greatest strike in England's history passed without disorder, but with practically complete stoppage of rallway transport throughout the country. Thus far it has been, from a union standpoint, the most successful tleup of industry ever recorded by warring labor.

To-night a great mass meeting of railway men was held in Albert Hall, at which James Henry Thomas, secretary of the National Union of railwaymen, after the audience for an hour had sung "The Red Flag," delivered a heated speech of censure against the Govern-ment, and declared that trouble was brewing which might lead to bloodshed. Both Thomas and C. T. Cramp, president of the union, who preceded him, as-serted that the men were firmly behind the leaders in this great crisis.

Says Government Lies.

President Cramp denounced the Gov-rament statement regarding the pur-ose of the strike as a "deliberate lie." It was not the public with whom the strikere were at war, he declared; it was the people who were for the moment in the position of directing the affairs of the

All the powers of hell, the press All the powers of hell, the press, platform and perhaps the pulpit would be invoked against the strikers, said President Cramp, but if they remained solid they would be victorious.

Both speakers denounced what feely characterized as the Government at-

tempt to bias the mind of the public by saying that the strike was not in de-fence of union rights, but against the life of the community. Answering the

life of the community. Answering the Premier's strong statement earlier in the day that the strike was an anarchistic conspiracy against the Government, Secretary Thomas declared if that were true "God help the country."

He had warned the Government that their proposals would be fatal to peace. He knew that trouble was brewing that might lead to bloodshed.

"My answer to the Prime Minister's challenge," said Mr. Thomas, "is that if he will now say to us officially himself, not influenced or intimidated by an one not influenced or intimidated by an one else—if he will say, as head of the State, that he is prepared to concede the same principle to all rallway servants, then the strike can cease at once."

Lloyd George Is Bitter.

In a telegram expressing his regrets that he would be unable to attend the soldiers' celebration at Carnarvon. Pre-mier Lloyd Beorge expressed himself on

can recall no strike entered into so lightly, with so little justification and such entire disregard for public interest. The strike is not one in which it can be contended that the workers are seeking to wring fair wages from harsh em-ployers, whose profits are believed to be excessive. In this case the railway men are dealing direct with the community.

"The State is now running the rall-ways at a loss, due in the main to the enormous increase made in the wages of the rall-way workers since the beginning of the war, and also to the great reduction in the hours of labor. This loss is being borne by the general taxpayer, and will soon have to be passed on to the general public in the form of increased fares and charges. On its merits the strike is inexplicable."

Describing the Government's terms as stated by Sir Robert Stevenson Horne. Minister of Labor, yesterday, as generous, the Premier says:

"The dispute, such as it is, is about says the first of the strike is now running the residual process. The precipitancy of this action of a deliberate and demonstrated that fact. When they remailing that they are not fighting for fair conditions for labor of their class but are being used by extremists for sinister conditions. The Government have reason to believe it has been engineered for some time by a small but active body of men who have wrought tirelessly and insidiously to exploit the labor organizations of this country for subversive ends.

"It has convinced me it is not a strike for wages or better conditions. The Government have reason to believe it has been engineered for some time by a small but active body of men who have wrought tirelessly and insidiously to exploit the labor organizations of this country for subversive ends.

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something which cannot possibly come into operation until next year; yet the nation is thrown into the dislocation of a hurried strike without even a week's warning.

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Pointing out that the men declined even to discuss the Government's offer o consider any particular injustices, he Premier declares: "Every employer, overy worker, is entitled to at least one week's notice to terminate contracts of service. The precipitancy of this action

acy. They can see the ruin and misery brought in other lands. And the common sense has hitherte guarded their organizations against the control of these intriguers. These men have

"There is no more patriotic body of men in this country than the railway men, and their conduct during the war femonstrated that fact. When they re-

the privations which will result from this indefensible strike, and give their aid to maintaining the fabric of social order upon which the prosperity of this country dependa."

In the beginning of his message Mr.

In the beginning of his included as Lloyd George says:
"I have been constantly criticised as too extreme a partisan of those who are struggling for better conditions."

Stoppage Is Complete.

J. H. Thomas, secretary of the striking railway men, issued this statement:
"There is a complete stoppage from John C. Groat's house to Landsend. It was what I expected, and it is only fair to say that it was what the Government itself expected."

With regard to yesterday's conference in Downing Street he declared Premier Lloyd George has made an offer in which Thomas saw a ray of hope and immediately attempted to interpret it as a possible way out. But before he could complete his sentence, he said, Transport Minister Geddes said to the Premier: "You cannot accept this."

Secretary Thomas added that he had long foreseen the danger of an upheaval

foreseen the danger of an upheaval would not merely be one of hours and wages but an attack upon the whole constitution of the country. There are some who would welcome that, he commented, adding that the press was making it the issue. He said he would beg the newspapers not to do anything which would make an already difficult situation where the pressure could not be worse. The railway men could not be diverted from fighting for what they considered a just principle, he said. Secretary Thomas declared that in all

his experience he had never found so determined a desire on the part of some of the Premier's advisers to do every-thing to prevent a settlement being

war had been disgracefully underpaid.

Liverpool's meat supply was held up at Birkenhead. At Hartlepool the steel works closed and the fron works are damping down. Clerks worked the trains on a small stretch of the Great Eastern. One sged union fireman refused to strike because he had completed to within one day of fifty years of service.

Several race meetings were abandoned. Sir Edward Carson was unable to onen his home rule campaign at Belto open his home rule campaign at Bel-fast because no train was available to take him from London. The mail deliveries in London to-day

were virtually restricted to letters posted were virtually restricted to letters posted in London, but the Postmaster-General is organizing a road transport for the mails and expects to have a fairly efficient service in the next day or two, which it is hoped to supplement with an air service. Arrangements have already been made to transport the mails to Beigium and Holland by airplanes.

rallwaymen's strike committee agreed late to-day to transport food needed by hospitals and fodder for the horses owned by the rallways. Government arrangements to meet the made many efforts to get hold of the strike emergency have been completed Scotch lawyer, popular in Parliament, levers of trade unionism; so far at with the greatest rapidity. Already but all the labor papers objected to his their endeavors have ended in failure.

distributed to prevent the stoppage of motor transports, upon which the nation may have to depend largely for food and other necessaries. One of the most serious features of the strike is that some of the most important

strike is that some of the most important manufacturing centres have only a few days' supply of coal and may be forced to shut their works.

The Cial Controller has issued orders stopping all foreign shipments of coal at Cardiff. His object is to conserve all coal for use in this country.

The Shipping Controller has issued the following appeal:

"One in three of the population of this country lives directly by the sea. The whole population is dependent on our mercantile marine. At the outbreak of the war all combined to save the country from disaster.

from disaster.

"In the present crisis it is essential to conserve coal and keep shipping running. I confidently call on owners, officers and men alike to repeat the spirit in which they faced the crisis of 1914."

Government Is Attacked.

The present strike is of a different nature from ordinary labor disturbances because the railways and the mines are under Government management. Therefore there is no question of the Govern ment maintaining neutrality between employers and workmen, as it has gen-erally attempted to do. The responsi-bility rests for the moment on the Cabinet, but Parliament may be sumnoned to support the Ministry in its

Heretofore the Government has bee blamed by a large section of the press for the country's after-war troubles, but nearly all the newspapers have now dropped partisanship and are supporting the authorities. The general opinion expressed by the newspaper commentators is that the labor leaders are trying to use the strike weapon to enforce their campaign for the nationalization

tional Service and Reconstruction: Sir Robert S. Horne, Minister of Labor, and Edward Shortt, Home Secretary,

Premier Is Conciliator.

The Premier alone of this group has a reputation as a conciliator in deal-ings with workingmen. The Geddes brothers have been the Government handy men in several offices during the war. Sir Eric, with his American railroading experience and his record as head of the Admiralty, gained a rating in the popular eye as a masterful and unyielding character.

Shortt's personality makes no special appeal to the sympathies of the working people. He is a lawyer with a court manner, who had a brief career as Irish Secretary in a stormy period. Recently he had to deal with the London police strike, when he stood successfully the unconditional discharge of all th strikers.
Sir Robert Stevenson Horne is a

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and no associations with labor interests.

The Food Controller, George Henry Roberts, on the other hand, is a Labor member of Parliament, The three labor leaders who figure thus far in the fight are C. T. Cramp, president of the National Union of Railwaymen; James Henry Thomas, general secretary of this union, and John Bromley, secretary of the Society of Engineers and Firemen.

Thomas Best Known Leader.

President Cramp is a man in the early forties. He is little known to the general public. James Henry Thomas is by far the best known of the three. He has been aligned with Arthur Hen-derson, John Ward and others as a rein the labor movement. Between him and Bromley there has been strong rivalry for leadership in the railway world.

Some newspapers have criticised the position of Mr. Thomas and other paid officials of the labor unions who are members of Parliament, making the point that their duties as legislators and as labor officials are bound to clash. Mr. Thomas was supposed to be against the strike, and is described by reporters as being in tears when discussing the

"I am convinced that the Premier was anxious to find some way to a set-tlement of the differences, but Sir Auck-land and Sir Erio Geddes barred every avenue to an understanding," he said.

CALL PARLIAMENT. **NEWSPAPERS URGE**

British Press Denounces Railway Men for Strike.

LONDON, Sept. 27.—Several papers commerting on the strike urge an imme-diate summening of Parliament, and there are some indications this will be done. It is contended the nation does not know the full story and that only searching debates in the House of Commone will reveal it.

All shades of opinion in the London press, except the Laborite Heald, con-lemn the National Union of Railwaynen, the action of which in declaring strike is described as a "wanton war on society and an attempt to starve the country into submission." The newspapors appeal to the people to support the Government in a finish fight. Some editorials express the desire to treat the railway men fairly and admit



no special knowledge of labor matters they are "entitled to every just considered and no associations with labor interests." eration," but it is asserted they have put cration," but it is asserted they have put themselves entirely in the wrong by "needlessly forcing an industrial war upon the country three months before the negotiating period would elapse."

The Daily News, which is always sympathetic to labor, says "there was no shadow or semblance of excuse for the strike," adding:

"The disproportion between the dead-liness of the weapon which has been unsheathed and the magnitude of the issues in dispute is such that even now there is ground for the hope that a sense of the wantonness of the wrong done the nation may bring a swift end to the strike."

to the strike."

J. H. Thomas, the union leader, and certain of his colleagues are credited by some newspapers with having tried to avert the strike, which is attributed in these quarters to alleged extremists who captured control of the executive committee of the union. On the other hand, the Herald maintains the Government and not the National Union of Railway Men, precipitated the crisis.

Men, precipitated the crisis.

The evening newspapers generally take a stand against the railway men. "For months the word 'compel' has and it was only a question of time before a trial of strength came. The war on the country.



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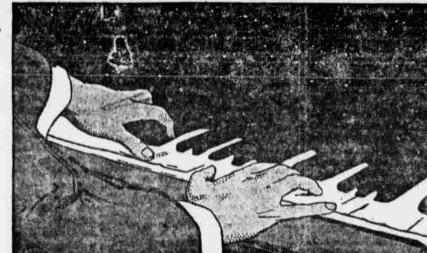
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